

THE REPORT OF THE FORTY SCHOLAR COUNCIL OF IMAM ABU HANIFAH

حدثنا أبي قال: حدثنا أبي قال: وحدثني أحمد بن محمد من سلامة قال: كتب إلي ابن أبي ثور: يحدثني عن سليمان بن عمران قال: حدثني أسد ابن الفرات قال:

كان أصحاب أبي حنيفة الذين دونوا الكتب أربعين رجلا، فكان في العشرة المتقدمين: أبو يوسف، وزفر بن الهذيل، ودาวود الطائي، وأسد بن عمرو، ويوسف بن خالد السمطي، ويحيى بن زكريا بن أبي زائدة، وهو الذي كان يكتبها لهم ثلاثين سنة
• فضائل أبي حنيفة - ابن أبي العوام ص ٣٤٢ •

My father narrated to us, he said: my father narrated to us, he said: Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Salamah narrated to me, he said: Ibn Abi Thawr wrote to me narrating from Sulayman ibn 'Imran who said: Asad ibn al-Furat narrated to me:

The council of Imam Abu Hanifah who documented the books (i.e. legal issues) were forty personalities. The leading ten among them were: Abu Yusuf, Zufar ibn Hudhayl, Dawud al-Ta'i, Asad ibn 'Amr, Yusuf ibn Khalid al-Samti, and Yahya ibn Zakariyya ibn Abi Za'idah. He (Yahya ibn Zakariyya) was their scribe for thirty years.

(Fada'il Abi Hanifah, Ibn Abi al-'Awam, p.342)

The following is the the status of this report:

- 1) The chain of transmission commences from the transmitter of the book, Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad i.e. the grandson of Ibn Abi al-'Awam. He is the first one who said: my father narrated to us.
- 2) Thereafter is his father, Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah i.e. the son of Ibn Abi al-'Awam. He is the second one to say: my father narrated to us.

This is understood from the fact that al-Kawthari in Fiqh Ahl al-'Iraq (Introduction to Nasb al-Rayah, vol.1, p.68) mentions Ibn Abi al-'Awam as the narrator from Imam al-Tahawi. Furthermore, the above two are the transmitters of the book. (Ibn Abi al-'Awam, Fada'il Abi Hanifah, p.11, p.15)

- 3) Thereafter is the author of the book, Abu al-Qasim 'Abd Allah ibn Muhammad Ibn Abi al-'Awam. Al-Salihi mentions him among those who wrote on the Manaqib of Imam Abu Hanifah and said, "They are all reliable and expert Hanafis who had vast knowledge." (Al-Salihi, 'Uqud al-Juman, p.49)

- 4) Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Salamah is none other than Imam Abu Ja'far al-Tahawi, who requires no introduction. (Al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, vol.11, p.361)

- 5) Ibn Abi Thawr. His full name is Abu al-'Abbas Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Abi Thawr who is also known as Ibn 'Abdun. Ibn Yunus said, "He was a scholar of the madhhab of the Iraqis and studied jurisprudence according to the school of Imam Abu Hanifah." (Ibn Yunus, Tarikh, vol.2, p.212) Qasim ibn Qutlubugha included him in al-Thiqat min Man Lam Yaq'a' fi al-Kutub al-Sittah (reliable narrators who are not found in the six books) and quoted Ibn Yunus who said he is well known. (Qasim ibn Qutlubugha, al-Thiqat, vol.8, p.369)

- 6) Sulayman ibn Ibrahim. He was a judge and was also known as Kharufah. Abu 'Abd Allah al-Qayrawani says, "He was diligent in his affairs and possessed intuition." (Al-Qayrawani, Qudat Qurtubah, p.236)

- 7) Asad ibn al-Furat. He was the student of Imam Malik, Imam Abu Yusuf, and Imam Muhammad. His lofty position is well known. (Al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, vol.10, p.225)

Moreover, al-Salihi enumerated Imam al-Tahawi among those who wrote a book on the Manaqib of Imam Abu Hanifah. (Al-Salihi, 'Uqud al-Juman, p.49) It seems as though the report is also found in the book in reference. This is because al-Qurashi directly cites the chain of al-Tahawi via the above mentioned route in several places in al-Jawahir al-Mudiyyah (vol.1, p.140/vol.2, p.211) In light of the above, the incident in question should be reliable.